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THE

Commonweal

REALITIES OF HISTORY

The Christian West

by Josef Pieper

The "Martin Luther" Controversy

Correspondence and Comment

John C. Cort

John Cogley

Ned O'Gorman

William Dunlea

Richard Hayes

Philip T. Hartung

Rosemary F. Deen

Volume LXV, No. 24 March 15, 1957 Twenty Cents

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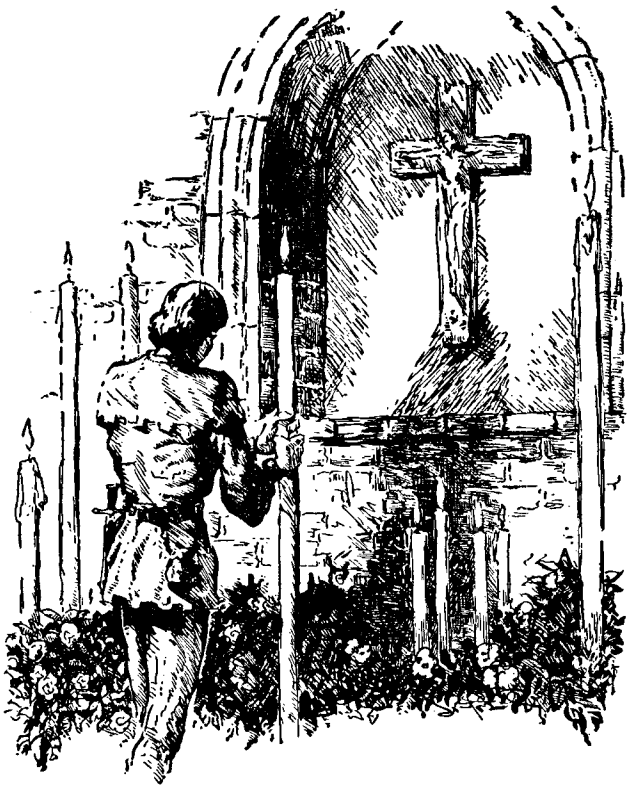

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1957 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685.

U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 20¢

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE "MARTIN LUTHER" CONTROVERSY

THE COMMONWEAL'S lead editorial of one month ago discussed the cancellation of the film "Martin Luther" by a Chicago television station as a result of protests from individual Catholics. At that time we stated that "the cancellation involves issues of grave importance to our society, issues which merit more serious discussion than they have so far received." We regarded as central to the discussion questions concerning Protestant-Catholic relations in this country, freedom of the TV screen, and those pressures which any minority group can legitimately exercise without violating the spirit if not the letter of democracy.

When we stated our own position we anticipated that many readers would agree with us, as indeed they have. But the issues are neither simple nor obvious and we expected serious and strong disagreement as well. As our correspondence columns in this issue show, our expectations were more than fulfilled.

Before turning to the principal issues we would like to clear up what we regard as unfounded inferences that some critics drew from our initial editorial. We did not, for instance, insinuate—although others did — that the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Chicago was responsible for the cancellation. (Elsewhere on these pages we print a communication from the Chicago Chancery office which was received as this issue was going to press and which should correct this impression where it exists.) We also fail to see how we can be justly accused of indifferentism. Although deeply unsympathetic to an arithmetical approach to truths, falsehoods and insinuations, we are intensely interested in separating essential differences from the non-essential. We certainly do not believe that minorities cannot defend themselves in a democracy, nor that Catholics have lesser democratic rights than other groups. These misunderstandings prevented some readers from considering what we regard as the significant issues.

It may seem an exaggeration to say that the film "Martin Luther" and the cancellation itself are fruit of the Reformation. But such is the case. They are at once the result and evidence of what has been termed "the scandal of Christendom," the division that has its roots in the time of Martin Luther. Nor is it easy to exaggerate the importance of the Chicago incident at this point in our national history. Ironically enough, for example, the St. Louis *Review*, in the very issue in which it favored the cancellation and the actions which led up to it, carried a front-page story which was distributed by the NCWC and entitled "Informed Laity Can Ease Catholic-Protestant Rift." The title derived from a talk by the Rev. Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor of *America*, in which he expressed concern because "tension between Catholics and Protestants is like a dark cloud looming on our civil and social horizons here in the United States." Father Davis made no reference to the Chicago incident, but we think his remarks were nonetheless directly relevant to it. Profound differences will not suddenly be dissipated by intelligence and good will, but where intelligence, good will and a measure of charity are absent, unnecessary differences and tensions will proliferate like an unhealthy growth.

There are certain intrinsic problems in writing or filming a life of Martin Luther. In his recent *Popular History of the Reformation*, Philip Hughes, one of the foremost Church historians, has referred to "the presence of conflicting Luther legends, those which have come down through the great army of his followers and the others which are a tradition among the people whom he left." Father Hughes

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also said that "Luther scholarship is, by now, a whole-time occupation for life. . . . The rival schools are as hot with one another about 'interpretation,' and theories and statements of fact, as though his ideas still swayed the world." With these facts in mind one can recognize—as we pointed out in our original editorial—that the Legion of Decency, which did not ban the film to Catholics, was just and restrained when it said the picture "contains theological and historical references and interpretations which are unacceptable to Catholics." That Catholics and Protestants view Luther differently is inevitable.

When faced with a picture such as "Martin Luther," Catholics must expect to see their own views opposed. But from the picture Catholics may learn what Protestants think about both their own religion and about Catholicism. And it may well be the occasion for them to clarify their own views of an historic breach. In doing this, however, they should make every attempt to separate the essential from the accidental. Above all, they should not attempt to deny historical abuses which the best Catholic scholars have long acknowledged. And they should not allow an awareness of even the essential differences between Catholic and Protestant to obscure the tremendous fact that both exist within the Christian tradition. It is in acknowledgment of this tremendous fact that we referred to the recent accounts of Luther by Louis Bouyer and Karl Adam.

Catholics and Protestants should have realized that to defend the showing of the film is not to defend every aspect of the film, and that a just criticism of the film need not impugn the sincerity or motives of those who produced it. Yet these seem to be the assumptions which lie behind much of the debate still going on. And now, given the national publicity that has followed the forced cancellation, it is all too likely that the picture will become a cause in itself, each side attracting energetic adherents while the significant questions disappear from rational view. For these reasons, considered only in terms of Catholic-Protestant relations, the cancellation was unfortunate.

The other significant issue concerns the pressure that any minority group can reasonably exercise given the presumptions of our pluralistic society. In our society the interests of different groups will necessarily conflict from time to time. We do not believe, as unfriendly critics have suggested, that an appeal to freedom solves all conflicts nor that a charge of censorship calls for automatic judgment. But we do believe that our society operates on certain presumptions which favor freedom. Just as it assumes a man innocent until he is proved guilty, so it decides in favor of freedom until there is a convincing need for constraint.

These presumptions protect rather than deny the right of minority groups to express their opinions. They allow each group to legislate for its own members, to advance what it regards as good

STATEMENT OF THE CHICAGO CHANCERY OFFICE

The present cancellation of a local television showing of the film "Martin Luther" has resulted in unfortunate misunderstandings and controversy. The issue which concerns this office is that many of these protests implicitly suggest that the Archdiocese of Chicago was responsible for its cancellation. This false assumption persists despite our denials. That some Catholics have exercised their democratic right as citizens to protest the showing of a film which, in their estimation, is historically inaccurate and in part derogatory, is not surprising nor unexpected. To record a protest is not always to exert a pressure, and to be silent has often been the worst kind of a betrayal.

What in these times is surprising and unexpected is that the protests of individual Catholics should be interpreted, not as the protests of citizens of other religious beliefs would be interpreted, but as the action and policy of the Archdiocese. All freedom-loving men will deeply regret and deplore such a situation.

To avoid further misunderstanding, we now emphatically state our position. It has always been our persuasion and experience that the several media of communication in our area have been consistently objective in their presentation of those things which are in the public interest. We have sought through radio and television to present the Catholic faith in a positive manner. We certainly do not wish, and have never wished, to deny the same opportunity to those of other religious beliefs. The honest expression of a religious viewpoint is not merely a democratic right; it is indispensable to a democracy.

If a television station deems that the "Martin Luther" film is a positive presentation of religious beliefs, and then decides to show it, we will not protest the decision in any way whatsoever.

We, of course, reserve the right to express ourselves on the film's historical accuracy and the manner in which it portrays the Catholic Church.

(*Rt. Rev. Msgr.*) EDWARD M. BURKE,
Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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and proper for society, and to be free of the coercive imposition of the moral or religious views of other minority groups. These principles, as they apply to religious groups, have been forcefully stated in the communication from the Chicago Chancery: "The honest expression of a religious viewpoint is not merely a democratic right; it is indispensable to a democracy."

Given these principles, what recourse was open to those Catholics who objected to the film? Was their freedom not limited if they were unable to protest? There was here an obvious conflict of interests, a conflict of freedoms. For Catholics the obvious alternatives were to maintain silence, to express their opinions concerning the film in the available media, or to bring pressure on the television station. Although prudence and adherence to the spirit of democracy would seem to dictate the second choice, many Catholics in Chicago chose to follow the last course.

Successful in their protest, at least momentarily, these Catholics attained a costly victory. Not only have they damaged Catholic-Protestant relations, but even on their own terms—which we do not accept—they have failed, for the *Christian Science Monitor* has reported an intense interest in the film since it was cancelled, and bookings for the film have sharply increased.

The Action Committee which was formed to protest the cancellation, however, is now attempting to correct one mistake by fostering another. For the Committee has filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission which would disenfranchise the station. The petition would, in effect, have the Federal Government order the station to run the film or to lose its license.

This petition is based on a principle with which we strongly disagree, for it would give to the State the power of deciding what should be shown on TV, of deciding even the merits of religious issues. We agree instead with the reasoned conclusions of Jacques Maritain that "the State is not equipped to deal with matters of intelligence" and that "each time the State disregards that basic truth . . . it is the body politic which, in one way or another, is finally victimized."

Out of a concern for the spirit of our democratic principles we criticized those Catholics who exerted pressure on the television station. Out of a concern for religious and intellectual conviction we oppose the intervention of Federal authority to decide what the TV screen will show. It is at once the strength, the glory and the weakness of a democratic society that it must depend upon the body politic to accept and act upon democratic presumptions even when they are not formalized by law. In this case both the original protest of the Catholics and the supposed corrective of the Action Committee fall grievously short of what is ideally demanded and practically expedient.

POLICY TOWARD THE SATELLITES

ARE THE peoples of Eastern Europe now to be abandoned to their yoke? Does unwillingness to risk a full-scale war to liberate these Russian satellites mean that the American people are simply to look the other way? These and related questions arise from the Soviet Union's recent accusations of American intervention before the UN. Happily, Henry Cabot Lodge wasted little motion on flat denials, but went on to make and imply the gravest, well-substantiated anti-Soviet charges of his own—and then to expound the real nature of the American relationship with the satellite peoples and what we can hope to do for them in their varying degrees of captivity.

Among the links which will persist in spite of everything are family and cultural ties. That is why Americans have a special interest in doing everything possible to help these peoples to preserve and deepen their spiritual and cultural traditions, those national and religious sentiments and ways of life which will bravely endure in the face of the most relentless oppression. The vital importance of this task not only underlines the potentialities of such agencies as Radio Free Europe but points to the desirability of the widest possible degree of cultural and personal interchange.

Such maintenance and expansion of inter-communication means something further. It helps these people to distinguish the facts as to what is happening in the world from the fictions they are fed from strictly controlled official sources—facts about the NATO peoples, the neutral world and the Soviet empire.

At the same time such communications from various channels in the United States (and other political democracies) should in no way argue or imply that these peoples necessarily ought to adopt our own social and economic view and institutions. That is their own affair. Our hope is that eventually they will be freed and able to live their own lives and to pursue unfettered their own local and national destinies.

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In the meantime American and UN efforts could well be focused on assisting these peoples to preserve their respective identities despite all imposed patterns. Assuredly one of the chief means of keeping hope—and heroic personal and national integrity—alive would be unflagging efforts to inform these subject peoples of the enduring concern of the American people, who themselves are intent upon the day when the satellites will be free. Steadfast refusal to acquiesce in any of the Soviet satellite conquests, even by implication, is the backbone of the policy which Mr. Lodge outlined so effectively at the UN.

STUDENT AID

WORKING ONE'S WAY through college, as many students do in this country, involves decided drawbacks. Too often, students are hindered from approaching their classwork in any but a perfunctory fashion because of long hours at work. Many are thus unable to derive the benefit they should from their years in an articulate academic community. Despite the folklore on the subject, this situation is far from ideal.

Massachusetts has now come forward with a solution—if hardly full-fledged. Loans will be available to qualified student applicants and extendable up to three and a half years after graduation. New York and three more New England states are also considering setting up corporations to make similar state-guaranteed, low-interest loans. The maximum envisaged, of $1,500, will hardly meet the charges for a four-year course at a non-public institution. But it could enable many students to get more out of college by cutting down on their extra-curricular working hours.

CENSORSHIP

A MICHIGAN statute forbidding the sale of books which might corrupt the morals of youth has just been invalidated by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court's decision, in the words of Justice Felix Frankfurter, was that the statute is "not reasonably restricted to the evil with which it is said to deal" and that its effect is "to reduce the adult population of Michigan to reading only what is fit for children."

The Michigan law is a perfect example of steps taken to suppress an evil themselves bringing about an even greater evil, and the court's rejection of such procedure is to be commended. Many of the world's greatest works of art are clearly unsuitable for children and might well have deleterious effects on youthful morals. But to deny these works on that account to the population at large is patently unreasonable and unjust.

It is, of course, necessary and proper that our children be protected in some way from moral dangers like these. And it is necessary and proper that they be protected from such dangers by the State, if parents are unwilling or unable to do it themselves. We are surprised, however, at the quickness of parents to make this admission—that they are unable or unwilling to protect the morals of their children.

First responsibility in such matters rests inescapably with parents, it seems to us, and we are alarmed by their apparent eagerness to relinquish their responsibilities. More and more, American parents seem to be looking to the schools or to other official agencies to perform the functions which properly belong to the family. Oddly enough, some of those most wary of "creeping statism" in other areas of American life seem blind to the danger of relying on governmental statute in the moral area.

The decision of the Court brings needed clarification to this troublesome matter of censorship. Furthermore, it is a decision to be hailed quite as much by "conservatives" as by "liberals."

NEWS NOTE

THERE IS OFTEN a considerable importance in the hardly noticed, random news note or in the tag at the end of an otherwise routine news story. Last week, for instance, the New York *Times* reported on the meeting of the General Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ and the Board's report on civil and religious liberties. The items of this report were, in our judgment, of varying degrees of value and importance, but of no extraordinary interest. At the end of the list of items, however, tacked on as a kind of afterthought, was a statement noting that the unsegregated General Board meeting was held for the first time below the Mason-Dixon line, that the delegates—Negro and white—were housed and fed without discrimination, and that there has been, apparently, no comment whatsoever.

This is a very minor point, perhaps, but it should not pass without remark. It is a good sign, and one we are happy to have seen.

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The Christian West

"IS IT POSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF THE WEST IN ABSTRACTION FROM CHRISTIANITY, OR AS BASED UPON A POSITIVELY NON-CHRISTIAN CULTURE?"

JOSEF PIEPER

ALTHOUGH THE "Christian West" is an accepted phrase in discussions, it is rarely clearly defined. For many people, indeed, the question, "What is meant by the term *Christian West?*" seems impossible to answer satisfactorily. They doubt whether any answer can be more than an idle enthusiasm for utopian planning or whether it can lead to real insights. But one might easily counter with an opposite query: Is a non-Christian West thinkable? Is it possible, that is, to conceive of the West in abstraction from Christianity, or to conceive of it based upon a positively non-Christian culture? Such conceptions are, I submit, indefensible. We are, of course, dealing here with facts; the question proposed is concerned with history. But "history" here means not only that which can be objectively confirmed—the past—but also the realities of today and tomorrow. And within this latter sphere the question-of-fact becomes really a challenge to decision, the decision of what this evolving reality shall be like.

The extent of our involvement where the West and Western culture are concerned is well revealed in discussions with Anglo-Saxons on the theme "Western Civilization." Such discussions also highlight the importance of the imponderables in these concepts (which are not just vague sentiments but conceptual elements extremely hard to put into clear terms). It is for this reason that the question "What is the West?" can always become freshly acute. They show further the impossibility of disposing of these questions with facile solutions. Often during such discussions I have had the feeling that my words were being misunderstood as fast as I uttered them, that the value of what I was trying to say was being conjured away through some sort of trick.

Last spring I was a guest at Stanford University during part of a two-year course on the "Western Tradition." Whenever I turned my gaze westwards, I was facing out over the Pacific towards China and Japan, towards the "Far East"; and when I attempted to increase the awareness of my hearers for great figures of the "Western Tradition" (Boethius, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas), our inner attention was continually turned towards the East, to Europe. It seems evident enough that the West originally had an inner-European location. But this is not so transparently clear as one might suppose. What is the East to which this West is opposed? For the Greek contemporaries of Aristotle, the East meant the Levant, Persia and those parts of Asia conquered by Alexander the Great. This raises the question whether even Greece itself was understood to be part of the West. For Augustine, Ambrose and Boethius, the East meant Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire. And the gradual severance of the empire into the Latin West and the Greek-speaking East, culminating in the eleventh century in the schism of the Eastern Church from Roman, has a direct bearing on that process which we must call the formation of the West. We cannot speak, however, as if this one-half of the old Roman Empire were simply, without further qualification, the West.

The Greek notion of the East was Asia Minor. But that includes the people of the Old Testament. And would the West be conceivable without the Biblical story of creation, the book of Job, the Psalms? Although the division of the Empire into Latin West and Greek East gives us a neat geographical distinction, may we on that account exclude Greek thought—Plato, Aristotle, Neo-Platonism, Pseudo-Dionysius, (above all, Aristotle!)—from the Western Tradition? Or the Greek Fathers of Christianity: Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostum?

WE BEGIN to appreciate the complexity of the question when we realize that, in spite of what has been said, it is truly the West, Western mentality, which molds these richly varied elements into that culture which, today, we still call Western. The West is not merely the Latin, the West-Roman, Empire alone. One must also consider the new peoples who poured into the Western Empire and quickly learned its language, Latin. It was, for example, the Goths

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whom Boethius had in mind about 500 A.D., when he undertook the translation of the Greek philosophers into—be it well remarked—Latin.

The nature of this Latin, Western, and, as one must add, Germanic spirit remains to be discussed. Only in these terms is it possible to give a definite answer to the question, "What is the Christian West?"

My attempt at a direct answer can be compressed into three words: the Christian West is *theologically grounded worldliness*. The quintessence and distinctive quality of the Western spirit are captured in these terms, for they refer to a worldliness grounded on Christian theology, the only genuine theology to be encountered in this quarter of the globe. One thing is immediately clear: we are dealing here with a combination essentially explosive; a high grade of mental and spiritual energy is required to join and maintain together these two elements in such a way that one does not overwhelm or extinguish the other. Worldliness always has the inner tendency to release itself from the restraints of theology and religion. Religion is steadily tempted to be exclusively "other-worldly." It has been the effort of the Christian West to keep both elements conceptually together, above all to *live* them together. It is this which distinguishes it from all that is non-Western and also from a non-Western Christianity.

The concept of a theologically grounded worldliness demands and is capable of development. It means, then, worldliness—an affirmative approach to the world. And in this connection "world" means particularly the *visible* world, the world of things which one can see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Worldliness also includes, however, the affirmation of the human body and, not the least, the affirmation of the natural reasoning powers. Worldliness means, in brief, the appreciation of natural reality in all its forms. Natural reality possesses—this is the claim—a genuine existence and activity of its own, which may not be ignored or extinguished through any attempt at making the religious sphere absolute.

In the first ten centuries of the Christian era, this attitude was not taken for granted. Yet, in spite of appearances, the attitude can claim to be legitimatized in Christian teaching and even in the Bible. It is something startlingly new when the Roman Boethius writes a treatise on the Blessed Trinity in which there is absolutely no citation of the Scriptures. And the monks of the Benedictine abbey of Bec in Normandy are following in that tradition when they request their abbot, Anselm of Canterbury, to write for them a book of theology in which all statements will be supported by human reason alone. But the most surprising thing is that it is monks, living apart from the world, who express such a desire, and a saint who fulfills it. What begins with Boethius and Anselm is completed in unmistakable form in the thirteenth century in what is called the "reception of Aristotle," the assimilation of his enormous contribution to human knowledge and wisdom into the Christian-theological interpretation of the world. This great achievement was due particularly to the labors of Albertus Magnus and his pupil Thomas Aquinas. It was Aquinas too who first formulated the theological foundation for this seemingly dangerous worldliness.

The danger was not merely apparent; worldliness was a real danger as St. Thomas clearly saw. But he saw also that this Aristotelian affirmation of the visible world was not something foreign or "pagan"; he recognized it as originally Christian. He claims it, at first against the resistance of the currently leading theology, as Christian property on the strength of two *theological* arguments. (This underscores the second element of the Western spirit: not merely worldliness, but theologically grounded worldliness.) The first argument can be put in a single sentence: all things—the visible world, the body, the natural reason of man—are good because God created them. The second argument occurs in an area which is in a more intensive sense theological, in the theology of the sacraments. If visible things become instruments and vehicles of salvation in the sacramental process—not only water, bread and wine but, once again and above all, the human body—how should these things not be good and therefore worthy of affirmation? indeed how could they not demand affirmation and veneration?

This argumentation is by no means a purely inner theological affair, nor is it merely theoretical. Here, a practical attitude towards the world is being decided. To put it more concretely, this theologically grounded affirmation of natural reality means that *eros,* the technical fields, political power, science, the whole realm of the worldly, together with their rights and claims, are declared to belong to the wide expanse of Christian existence. The argumentation does not, of course, forget the correlated challenge to these worldly elements to submit to a transformation and reshaping according to the ultimate theological norms.

THIS LAST REMARK points up how explosive are the elements which form the center of Western mentality. But this fruitful tension *is,* in fact, the distinguishing note of that mentality. It can be more clearly seen perhaps in contrast to its opposite pole, the non-Western mentality. During a recent tour of Western Germany, several theologians of the Russian-Orthodox Church were astonished to find such things as church-sponsored relief organizations, equipped and organized according to the most up-to-date technical methods. They were even more astonished to learn of the blueprints for the shaping of social life and a just work-order which are formulated in terms of the

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social encyclicals of the popes. Such things are unimaginable for a religious thought which is fully expended in the processes of cult and contemplation—unthinkable for a specifically non-worldly and therefore non-Western piety. Islam also, in spite of its political aggressiveness, is basically non-worldly. We are, to be sure, indebted to the Arabs for their mediation of Aristotle to us in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But only the West has accepted in the full sense this Greek wisdom, so eminently worldly-minded, and absorbed it into the traditional Christian theological interpretation of the world. Islam itself refused to accept Aristotelianism; the great medieval Arab commentators were expelled from the religious community of Islam.

How this fundamental separation of worldliness and religious thought works out in practice can be well seen in the following ancedote, perhaps fictitious, which possesses nonetheless symptomatic value. An Arabian chieftain wanted to install a telephone connection in his desert palace. This immediately aroused the gravest misgivings among the theologians, who declared that such an apparatus was not justifiable according to the Koran. The chieftain's reply was to have verses from the Koran recited on the telephone, thereby disarming the theological resistance. This ancedote is of little importance, but it does suggest the fact that from the standpoint of Koranic religious thought, a subduing and still less a transformation of worldly reality is, in principle, not possible. The unavoidable fate of the worldly reality itself is clearly demonstrated in the artificial secularism and rootlessness which characterizes the intellectual climate of modern Turkey.

But our chief concern is the distinguishing characteristic of Western mentality. We have called it the fusion of worldliness and religious thought, a theologically grounded worldliness and a world-affirming and world-forming theology. The fusion of these two elements we have called explosive and dangerous. It cannot be achieved once and for all. It is not to be expected that a final balance can ever be reached. It is, rather, a decision which each new epoch must freshly make. The Western genius is not simply a finished product, consisting of intellectual achievements and institutions which can be handed down unchanged from generation to generation. The Western genius is a design or blueprint, which possesses an organic, continuous life, and which must be ever freshly realized according to the changing conditions of each new era.

FOR THIS reason, the defenses against a dissolution of this fusion belong also to the Western mentality. The two leading defenses will continue to be religious warnings against a purely worldly attitude and, at the same time, the rejection of a completely "other-worldly" religious thought. This contrapuntal movement of two related voices is also a specifically Western phenomenon. One could even say that the tension which keeps this delicate balance *is* the genius of the West. Non-Western mentality consists, in particular, of two attitudes which are by no means imaginary dangers; they are very genuine threats which have accompanied the entire history of the unfolding of Western mentality. On the one hand, that religious thought which is untroubled by any obligations to the world is un-Western. On the other hand, and equally un-Western, is a worldliness unaffected by any superworldly claims. By way of negation, perhaps, these observations serve once more to answer the question about the nature of the Christian West.

TWO HOMILIES

(for Mark Van Doren)

1.

Expect this,
that rock may be supposéd bear
or any elephant may shiver
from a rose
and some undoubted seer
may hold the brainless edge of thought.
O anything may be a circle
or any man, however hump
may move like cleanest prince
through ordinary halls and
touch each foot on hunted gold.
That dark imago of a bird
may be a nun who rises
to some accident of trumpet
that merely is
a falling, red balloon.
O beautiful collision
when mind meets the shaping light
and waits in adoration
while all things clang.

2.

It may or may not be decisive
whether or not the sun is fire
or the lark a goddess
or the current angel incisive prodigal
or the dead mime a hyacinth
or policemen the enemies' bad dream.
This is all that will ever count;
that the sun be enough of roundness
that the rock describe the ground
that the priest carry his body high
that the river flow with the swan
that the night bring hawk and star
that some man touch with gentleness his son.

NED O'GORMAN.

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House Cleaning for Labor

JOHN C. CORT

BACK IN THE Terrible Thirties a truckdriver came into the New York offices of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists looking for help. He was engaged in a small-scale struggle with racketeers controlling one local of the Teamsters Union.

I have forgotten most of the details, but one scene stands out. He was describing an encounter between himself and two members of the mob on a dark and rainy night out on the street under the elevated structure in a lonesome section of the New York waterfront. They were trying to persuade him to lay off. And at one point in the conversation he felt something sticking into his side and looked down and saw that it was a gun. As they continued talking he began to say his prayers.

This kind of scene is a familiar one in the annals of crime, but I must say that I had never begun to understand what it feels like to have a gun shoved in your ribs until I heard this man describe it. And I remember the terrible sense of outrage and frustration we all felt trying to fight against guns with leaflets, meetings and newspaper stories.

This particular truckdriver was never the same after the gun incident. And the movement for reform in that local didn't go anywhere. By a funny twist of fate it wasn't until Dave Beck became president of the Teamsters Union four years ago that anything drastic was done in that local. At that time the president was cited by the State Crime Commission and within fifteen minutes after he got word of the testimony Beck stepped in and appointed a trustee to take over the union. But that was four years ago.

Today Beck has suddenly developed a passionate interest in the Hungarian refugee problem and other European labor developments which he has flown hastily to Europe to study on the scene, and if anyone thinks this is because Senator McClellan's special investigating committee is looking for him, he is probably right.

Left behind to speak for this powerful, big union (1,400,000 members in a key industry, $37,000,000 in the treasury) was Jimmy Hoffa, a tough and fast-talking operator who once remarked contemptuously to a friend at an AFL-CIO convention, "This hall is full of guys who are satisfied to go on making 120 bucks a week for the rest of their lives." Hoffa has been indicted twice himself but never convicted, and just as Beck fought his way into a position of dominance in the union while old Dan Tobin was still president, so Hoffa is quietly but surely snitching the mantle of power off the shoulders of the aging Beck.

Beck did stay around long enough to cast the single dissenting vote on a resolution passed by the AFL-CIO executive council at its recent meeting in Miami. The resolution denounced those who refused to testify before "proper legislative committees" and said that such a union leader "has no right to continue to hold office in his union." Beck could hardly have been expected to vote for the resolution since four officers in his own union were in this category, two of them being Einar Mohn, executive vice-president, and Frank Brewster, Western Conference president, and since it was well-known that among the questions that the Senate committee wanted to ask them was how much money the union had given Beck and how come they had bought his house for $163,000 and then continued to let him live in it rent free. Incidentally, the four officials have since been cited for contempt of Congress.

It was after the passage of this resolution that Beck, apparently discouraged, took off for Europe by way of Nassau.

HE SHOULD have stayed around. The Council was just getting warmed up. They subsequently passed, by unanimous vote, four codes establishing standards of conduct for affiliated unions as regards: issuance of local charters; employment of "racketeers, crooks, Communists or Fascists" as union officials (they were against it); investment by union officers in companies with which they do business as union leaders or who do business with companies with which they do business (they were against it unless investment is "in the publicly traded securities of widely-held corporations" and "does not constitute a substantial enough holding to affect or influence the course of corporate decision"); and the administration of health and welfare funds (they should be clean as a whistle).

These codes were pretty specific. Beck would have been interested because he himself has substantial holdings in companies out Seattle way with which the

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Teamsters Union has contracts. And he has himself issued charters for paper locals, as in the New York Joint Council rhubarb, in a manner which has now been condemned by the AFL-CIO. And finally, some of his locals have welfare funds which have been sullied by the breath of suspicion.

Of course the AFL-CIO has no police power to enforce these codes other than its power to suspend and expel. But using this power, the Council proved a certain measure of sincerity when it served notice on three of its affiliated unions either to clean house within ninety days or stand suspended, with probable expulsion to follow at next November's convention. These were the Distillery Workers (25,000), the Laundry Workers (72,000) and the Allied Industrial Workers (73,000). All three unions gave off noises indicating righteous indignation, so that it appears that these organizations will soon be banished to exterior darkness. All three had been tried by the Ethical Practices Committee of the AFL-CIO and convicted of being "dominated, controlled and substantially influenced by corrupt influences." Item: Secretary-Treasurer E. C. James of the Laundry Workers was, according to the evidence, responsible for the embezzlement of more than $1,000,000 in welfare fund insurance premiums. Although James, along with the secretary-treasurers of the other two unions, resigned his union position, the Laundry Workers refused to take any action against him.

It is a significant fact that the findings against all three unions relied mainly for support on facts brought out during an investigation into union welfare funds by a subcommittee of the Senate Labor Committee headed by the generally pro-labor Senator Douglas (D-Ill.).

Of course it is one thing for the AFL-CIO Executive Council to crack down on three little unions totaling 170,000 members between them. And it would be another thing entirely to get tough with the mighty Teamsters Union. It is no secret, however, that there are members of the Council who would enjoy getting tough with Beck and the Teamsters, and they are not all from the old CIO either.

Beck has stated that he and his fellow officers will testify before the new McClellan committee. He is due back late in March. No doubt the committee will also want to talk to Mr. Hoffa. This is going to be the key conversation. Beck is on the way out anyway. But if the committee can make Hoffa look bad, then the odds are that he too may be on the way out. Most people don't know about it, but there are decent elements in the Teamsters' Union that are ready and willing to move in if anything happens to Hoffa. These hearings are the pay-off. If Hoffa can come through them fairly clean, then there will probably be no stopping the man —at least not in the Teamsters Union. What the Council will do about the Teamsters depends on how much dirt McClellan's committee uncovers about the union as a whole and what the Teamsters do about it themselves.

Here the calendar becomes interesting. The Executive Council meets again in May, which will probably be after the McClellan Committee has got in most of the dirt. Then the Teamsters have a convention and election of officers next September (look for Beck to step out) and the AFL-CIO has its second convention next November.

Anything can happen. Of course the cynical ones will deny that. They think it is all cut and dried. The AFL-CIO will do nothing about the Teamsters, they say. They also predict that the AFL-CIO will probably bust up itself over continuing tension between the former CIO unions, led by Walter Reuther, and the old AFL unions, particularly in the building trades, led by Beck and Hoffa, William Hutcheson of the Carpenters, and Richard Gray, head of the Building Trades Department.

More naive types like the writer continue to believe that the AFL-CIO is doing all right and getting stronger all the time. Put it all together, take it apart, put it together again, and add it up. The conclusion here is that the Executive Council down there in Miami did more to rid the labor movement of corruption and racketeering than has ever been done before in the history of the movement. Maybe it wasn't perfection, but it was certainly progress.

* * *

SHORT NOTE: The word is around that *Social Order,* the Jesuit monthly published by the Institute of Social Order in St. Louis, will have to go out of business if it doesn't get more subscribers. Anyone who has read this magazine will probably agree that it is the best thing in the field (economic and social commentary) and that its death would be a tragedy for the whole social action movement of the Church in America. Please be guided accordingly. Subscription: $4.00 a year. Address: 3908 Westminster Place, St. Louis 8, Mo.

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THE WITNESSES' DILEMMA

ARTHUR MILLER has been cited for contempt of Congress, so it is very possible that America's leading playwright may go to jail for refusing to "name others" before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Miller, though never a member of the Communist Party, participated in a number of front activities and attended some informal meetings of Communist writers eight or nine years ago. He says now that he has no sympathy for the Communist cause and is quite willing to answer any questions about himself, but he refuses on conscientious grounds to "bring trouble" to others by naming them before the Committee.

Another leading playwright, Lillian Hellman, was bothered by the same scruple some years ago. Miss Hellman was called before the House Committee in 1952. She wrote to the chairman, at that time Congressman Wood, and stated that she was prepared to answer any questions about herself. If she had any knowledge of disloyalty, she stated, she would have voluntarily brought it to the attention of authorities. "But," she wrote, "to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent, and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion. . . ." Miss Hellman offered to waive her privilege of taking the Fifth Amendment if the Committee would agree not to ask her to supply the names of others. The Chairman answered that "the Committee cannot permit witnesses to set forth the terms under which they will testify." Miss Hellman then pleaded the Fifth Amendment.

Another theatrical personality, Larry Parks, begged the Committee: "Don't present me with the choice of either being in contempt of this committee and going to jail or forcing me to really crawl through the mud to be an informer, for what purpose?"

Congressman Walter, now chairman of the Committee, was sympathetic with Parks' plight. "How can it be pertinent to the purpose of this inquiry," he asked, "to have the names of people when we already know them? Aren't we actually, by insisting that this man testify as to names, overlooking the fact that we want to know what the organization did, what it hoped to accomplish, how it actually had or attempted to influence the thinking of the American people through the arts?" But the Committee counsel insisted that it was pertinent and indeed vital. The distraught Larry Parks gave in and supplied the names.

What is to be said of all this? There seem to be good arguments on both sides. Once you grant Congress the right to make inquiries of the kind undertaken by the Un-American Activities Committee—and just about everybody does—it seems only reasonable to give Congress the authority to carry out such inquiries. As Mr. Wood replied to Miss Hellman, the Committee can hardly agree to letting witnesses set forth their own terms.

It is true that many of the people who took part in Communist movements of one kind or another did nothing illegal or traitorous. The vast majority of the hundreds of thousands who went through the Communist Party had nothing to do with Soviet espionage or meaningful subversion. The Whittaker Chamberses and Elizabeth Bentleys were always a small, select group. It is true too that people who have been named before Committees have suffered private humiliation, loss of employment and though personally innocent of wrongdoing have been associated in the public mind with the Soviet espionage ring and disloyalty. If they testify freely, naming others, they have usually been able to redeem themselves. But in doing so they have "brought trouble" to others. If they take the Fifth Amendment, they do not escape the personal stigma but do have the satisfaction of not having "brought trouble" to others. If, like Arthur Miller, they do neither they risk imprisonment.

In some cases these Fifth Amendment witnesses may still be Communists, acting under orders. But I would say that the larger group using the privilege has felt the same way as Larry Parks, Lillian Hellman and Arthur Miller. Unlike Miller, though, they have not been ready to risk imprisonment in order to avoid the distasteful business of naming old friends and acquaintances who, they are convinced, like themselves may have been guilty of political stupidity but were innocent of knavery.

Such people are embittered. The Committee is righteous in its constant demand for "names." The public is confused. The courts have to back up the authority of the Congressional committees.

Congressional committees have performed some valuable services, though a lot of mischief has been done under their auspices, too. But when a case like Miller's comes up, it is easy to see their intrinsic shortcomings. As George Sokolsky once wrote: "Civil liberties are always impaired by Congressional committees. . . . The fundamental trial by jury, the right of a day in court, the right to be represented by counsel and many other basic civil rights are impaired."

Very few want to limit Congress' right to investigate subversion. But many Americans who want to protect that right are disturbed by the problem Arthur Miller faces. There is the dilemma. JOHN COGLEY.

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THE STAGE

A NOVELIST'S THEATER

THE IMAGINATION is open and flexible in Mr. Graham Greene's new play, the flush of life altogether richer—void almost of that private insistence or collusion which corrupts so much of his work like the rotten stump of a tooth, aching and full of clamorous pain. Mr. Greene's stance here is poised in a cool humanism, which permits "The Potting Shed" to command the stage with a rational interest and sobriety. It may seem graceless, then, to frost this praise with reservation, but I cannot believe that Mr. Greene's pieces for the theater will alter substantially the body either of his achievement or his reputation. They appear to me rather as serious divertissements, interludes—of indisputable authority, it is true—in a professional novelist's career. What they lack—"The Living Room" and "The Potting Shed" —is the presence of a natural dramatic sensibility, which is to say, a form. Form has been defined as the emergence of an idea in terms of sensibility, and Mr. Greene never lacks for ideas which suggest a provocative reading of experience: they resist translation, however, into the idiom and conventions of the theater.

We may see the characteristic movement and quality of Mr. Greene's sensibility in a passage such as the following, drawn from his story of blighted innocence, "The Basement Room."

> He loved Baines, but Baines had involved him in secrets, in fears he didn't understand. The glowing morning thought 'This is life' had become under Baines's tuition the repugnant memory. 'That was life': the musty hair across the mouth, the breathless cruel tortured inquiry 'Where are they,' the heap of black cotton tipped into the hall. That was what happened when you loved: you got involved; and Philip extricated himself from life, from love, from Baines with a merciless egotism.

The moment is packed and violent, the consciousness multiple, the implications allusive—Mr. Greene imposes here the demonic imprint of his personality. Yet he is drawing on resources which are available to the novelist but denied the playwright: the latter must work within a dramatic pattern of less scope; he must sacrifice the delicacies of shading to development of theme and motif.

Mr. Greene's imagination is dramatic but it is not theatrical: it never quite achieves some central independence of his personality. The stuff of actuality which makes his fiction so sulphurously vivid—the voice rasping darkly at our ear; the montages of seediness and disgust—resist dramatic investiture. Indeed, the novelist's position in the theater is always an anomalous one: his moral intelligence, the boldness with which he charts the sea of time and traces the tides of individual life which feed it, are ever enriching. But the stage is not the proper area of his sensibility, and it is necessary to make that discrimination, the more so at this time when a touching illusion is abroad that accomplishment in an exacting form is to be had by, as it were, shifting gears. When the novelist does successfully turn to the stage, his theater will often take the characteristic form of a strategic, almost allegorical, demonstration of experience: the command of such a work will usually lie not in the audacity of its ideas, nor the texture of its sensibility, nor the energetic imaginative vitality and instinct of its personages, but rather in the scale and construction of its design.

"The Potting Shed" is linked, in subtle affinity, to those other distinguished and recent demonstrations of experience, Mr. T. S. Eliot's "The Confidential Clerk" and Miss Bagnold's "The Chalk Garden." (A fruitful examination might also be made of its similarities to Mr. Angus Wilson's novel of contemporary England *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes.*) All three take as theme the rationalist order and impinge on that some alien and dismaying visitation: in "The Chalk Garden" the enigma of personality; in "The Confidential Clerk" vocation and the danger of human wishes; in "The Potting Shed" the overtly supernatural. All three derive much of their power from the steady drive toward the secret withheld, a mode of action which has not lost its urgency since Sophocles. Finally, the Socratic admonition in each is palpable: Know Thyself—which Mr. Greene characteristically alters to read: Doubt Thyself.

The signal virtue of "The Potting Shed" is that its theme is faith, and that it but rarely traffics in pity and sexual love and suicide, those rusty gears of the spiritual life which grind so noisily in the neighborhood of Mr. Greene's imagination. They are stilled here, and yet we move with no less involved passion to the heart of the play, and one of those charismatic scenes at which the novelist excels: two mangled souls, rattling with loveless despair in the husk of the body, sit across a bottle of whiskey in the parlor of a provincial rectory, while an oleograph of the bleeding Sacred Heart looks down, and there moves "somewhere behind it all the love of God." It is the landscape of Greeneland—the rat crouching on the bathtub, the flapping vultures and the yellow skull, treachery and bad teeth and the smell of onions and damp pity under a mosquito netting and the Host trembling on the liar's tongue—and the obsessed man moves across it with black authority. One may object in feeling to certain passages in the scene—security of taste in

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our theater is not so infallible as to enforce response at a proper depth—yet Mr. Greene has drawn irresistibly in his wake the metaphysical shudder of awe.

The remainder of the drama moves on to a plane of sober and distinguished statement, an intricate reading of experience Mr. Greene unravels with much tact and reticent grace. These are uncommon aspects of the novelist's quality, and one responds to them with gratitude. The control of private manias in "The Potting Shed" is altogether its most singular feature: the puzzled, but quiet and even humorous tenderness; the poised waiting on God. In her oblique but telling commentary on Mr. Greene's imagination, (*Thought,* Spring 1954), Miss Elizabeth Sewell "placed" the novelist as a late neo-Romantic, in Manichean torment, and suggested as the Romantic's prayer the closing apostrophe of Baudelaire's *Voyage à Cythère: Seigneur, donnez-moi la force et le courage/ De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût.*

Miss Sewell calls it prayer, in the last resort, for the ability to be just, and "The Potting Shed" would seem to indicate that it is being answered. I can pay no higher tribute to this play than to praise the security with which it renders the supernatural in terms of the natural, tempers grace with the gravity of all that is human, and responds with loving, manly care (and some awkwardness of disuse) to the things of this world.

I have spoken of justice: Mr. Carmen Capalbo's production of "The Potting Shed"—a world premiere, incidentally, which honors our theater—does it that, but one misses some burnishing of mercy. The texture of Mr. Greene's play is richer than this somewhat juiceless and perfunctory rendering would indicate: certain themes might be more heavily scored, notably the rationalist motif, though American audiences, lacking this tradition, will never sufficiently grasp its irony. Then too, the stage at the Bijou is small, and unhappily confines the players, particularly Dame Sybil Thorndike, who is never less than grand. Dame Sybil, however, gives a reverberating performance, full of eloquent detail, of a role which is little more than a playwright's *donnée:* she almost convinces us of this woman's panic before the unknowable, and her destructive hardness of heart. With one exception—the part of a fey, prying girl, one of those gamin adolescents English writers so delight to draw—"The Potting Shed" is acted with uncommon distinction. Sir Lewis Casson need employ only a small measure of his talent to fix the caricature of a rationalist pedant. Miss Leueen MacGrath, as a point of baffled, secular harmony, plays with that fluent dignity and quick imaginative sympathy so uniquely hers. Mr. Robert Flemyng registers the dusty acedia of the quintessential Greene hero; his presence is at once spiritually void yet throbbing with pain. An insistent monotony threatens Mr. Flemyng's delivery, however, and it would be disturbing if that obscured the subtle intelligence of his reading. To Mr. Frank Conroy has fallen the play's mesmeric central scene, and he carries it with large, ample style and power in reserve, his voice decelerating until finally, with a twitch on the thread, we are propelled, shuddering, into the darkness and terrible love beyond time. (*At the Bijou.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

LAUGHING DOWN THE LANE

IF EVER a film was well named it is "The Happy Road," a delightful comedy produced and directed by Gene Kelly in Europe. Its story is simple enough, almost nothing: a little boy and girl run away from their boarding school in Switzerland to hit the road for Paris and are pursued by the boy's widower father and the girl's divorcee mother. It's what happens, on the road, to the four main characters, as well as the people they meet, that provides the fun. And fun it is, because Director Kelly has done the whole thing with a lyrical bounce that is sustained almost the whole long way.

The kids, of course, steal the show and are perfectly played by Bobby Clark, as the boy who wants to win some attention from his father, a very American business man in Paris, and Brigitte Fossey (not quite as solemn as she was in "Forbidden Games") as the French girl who adores Bobby and wants to go wherever he goes. Bob has mixed emotions about Brigitte but he allows her to tag along. Although they come off second best, the adults are amusing too—Gene Kelly as Bobby's terrible-tempered father who just can't adjust to French ways, and Barbara Laage as Brigitte's mother who is less interested in Gene's problems of adjustment than in getting her daughter back to school and then hurrying to the Riviera for her own wedding. Gene and Barbara soon discover that their nationality differences aren't important, but the picture wisely doesn't push this romance.

What "The Happy Road" does push is the idea that people are pretty much the same the world over—especially children. French kids all along the way, discovering that Bobby and Brigitte are running away from *school,* give their all to help them. Adults, however, have a way of gumming up the works, as in one hilarious episode showing NATO troops at war games, where the missing children turn up under the nose of a bumbling general (Michael Redgrave). But I won't give away the picture's surprises. "The Happy Road" should be seen and taken.

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I WISH "Oh, Men! Oh, Women!" didn't try quite so hard. The movie based on Edward Chodorov's play has some amusing lines and situations, and no doubt psychoanalysis deserves the ribbing it gets in this comedy—but somehow the jokes and the razzberries seem to be held too long, and the fun wears thin. Producer-director-writer Nunnally Johnson gave his movie an elegant production with a fancy cast and plenty of laugh-provoking dialogue. The "Oh, Men!" come through better than the "Oh, Women!" and win the most chuckles: David Niven as the psychoanalyst whose professional and private lives converge when a talkative patient reveals secrets about his fiancée; Dan Dailey as an actor who is convinced that the doctor is hurting instead of helping his ailing marriage; Tony Randall shining brightly in his first movie as a crazy, mixed-up kid who comes to Niven for help because he just can't get Niven's fiancée out of his almost empty head. The "Oh, Women!" of course are much prettier, especially Ginger Rogers as Dan's bored wife, who feels unneeded and worse off than Nora in "The Doll's House," and Barbara Rush as Niven's delectable fiancée. Barbara solves all problems by simply putting them out of her mind—which isn't very full anyway. Director Johnson lets these people talk their heads off. Some of the psychiatry jokes are forced and stale, but the good cast makes the most of them.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The "Martin Luther" Controversy

CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMENT

The Commonweal's editorial, "Martin Luther in Chicago," has resulted in considerable correspondence and editorial discussion, a representative selection of which follows. Further comment may be found on Page 603. —THE EDITORS.

Westchester, Ill.

TO the Editors: I must take exception to the editorial "Martin Luther in Chicago" in your February 15th issue. My reaction is that it could easily have been written by an able and earnest Protestant, who could not be expected to view the Church as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ. At least to me, there are very distinct overtones of religious indifference in the editorial. Actually, this note of indifferentism seems to be a secondary theme, the first obviously being a defense of freedom of expression. I suggest a reappraisal of your editorial policy, accenting the question: When does a broad mind become an indifferent one?

Many of us are sorry that the film was cancelled because of the resulting misunderstanding created among non-Catholics. It appears you regret the cancellation because it denied another religion its right to present the truth as it sees it. This is an immediate corollary of the doctrine that says: One Church Is As Good As Another. May I remind you that truth is not relative? As Catholics, we tolerate error. We need not and must not defend its rights even in a democracy.

I further find your article offensive in the innuendo that the Chancery Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago stimulated the pressure group. I feel it is about time that your publication and others, which to non-Catholic eyes represent the Church, begin to take a positive approach to the Church's mission. Leave the erratic sniping to those who cannot be expected to have our vision.

(*Rev.*) CHARLES GALLAGHER.

Darlington, N.J.

TO the Editors: Your editorial of Feb. 15 contends that the cancellation by Chicago station WGN-TV of the television premiere of the film "Martin Luther" involves issues which "turn on the freedom of the TV screen and on the pressures which any one group can legitimately exercise in a society where there exists a plurality of incompatible faiths." More central is the issue whether in this type of society one group may be allowed a medium of mass communication to denigrate another.

It is good that "Martin Luther" was not presented by WGN-TV. Not because the film is sympathetic to Dr. Luther (which is a domestic matter for Lutherans), nor because it is judged theologically unsound by the Legion of Decency (which is a domestic matter for Catholics), but because it so depicts the Catholic Faith as to bring non-Catholics to judge the Church adversely. "Martin Luther" is a polemic against things Catholic. Moreover, it is an untrue polemic, for its portrayal of Pope Leo X is caricature, its presentation of the Church's teaching on Judgment and Indulgences calumny, its contrast between crafty Catholic and artless Evangelical princes propaganda. Since few non-

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Catholics will be aware how serious is the distortion, few will view the film without thinking less of the Church.

In a society such as ours, with tensions enough, those controlling mass communications have a responsibility not to allow their media to serve the lessening of respect between religious bodies.

(*Rev.*) HENRY G. J. BECK.

Dubuque, Iowa

TO the Editors: Your editorial concerning the attempt to show the film "Martin Luther" on a Chicago TV station gives the impression that you support either the position that (1) a minority may not defend itself against lies, half-truths and unwarranted insults without injuring the cause of democracy, or that (2) everyone has a right to make use of the processes that democratic freedom allows unless he happens to be a Catholic.

Surely in a free pluralistic society everyone has a right to make what use he can of the means of communication to propose his religious beliefs as long as they are of such a nature as not to injure the common good. That right hardly extends to spreading historical calumny against another religion. The Legion of Decency (which you quote) does not assert more than is necessary for its purposes. It saw no need to place itself in the position of having to document a statement to the effect that the film contains a favorable impression of Luther and an extremely unfavorable presentation of the Catholic religion which is the result of misrepresentation of historical fact. That statement, however, has been adequately documented many times since the film began to be shown. Even self-respecting Protestant scholars would not recognize the Luther of the film. Protestant leaders in Germany (where Luther is much more of an "actual" problem than he is here) suggested considerable changes before showing the film in Germany not only to avoid offending Catholics but to avoid making Lutherans a laughing stock.

If a film presenting the teaching of some religion were to assert or plainly imply that Catholics store guns and ammunition in the basements of their churches, plot the overthrow of the government, charge fees for the remission of sins and eat babies every second Sunday, would it be undemocratic to protest the showing of the film on TV? If it would, what is the precise distinction between the lies we can protest against and the lies we must ignore? The Chicago Chancery Office let it be known that it made no protest against the showing of this film. It is claimed that the protest came from individual Catholics, which is very probably the case. Are we the only citizens of the United States who have no right to protest insults to our religion based upon falsehoods?

True, Louis Bouyer and Karl Adam have given sympathetic accounts of Luther. So have I in my seminary history classes and in public lectures. But a sympathetic account of Luther based on the truth is one thing, a glorification of Luther based on falsehood and misrepresentation at the expense of the Catholic Church is quite another.

If the only democratic defense against a lie is the truth, the laws against libel should be done away with as undemocratic. The ridiculous notion that if truth has an equal chance it will always prevail is refuted by the whole course of human history and ignores original sin.

Finally, if the protest of Catholics has, as you suggest, injured the freedom to which television has a right how do you exempt the Protestant Action Committee from causing similar injury? Freedom is either to do or not to do. The Chicago station wanted to please its audience. It decided to run the film. It found out that its audience would be more displeased than pleased. It freely decided not to run the film. Now if the PAC is trying to convince the station that its audience would really be more pleased if the film were run, it is doing the same thing in organized fashion that Catholics are claimed to have done in unorganized fashion. If, however, the PAC is trying to defend the "principle" that anyone who has the money to buy TV time should be able to show anything he wants to show, is that no attack on the freedom of TV? Anyway, who would want to defend the proposition that anyone who can afford to buy a TV station automatically achieves full autonomy as an authorized teacher of mankind? I certainly don't.

(*Rev.*) AUGUSTINE ROCK, O.P.

Kankakee, Ill.

TO the Editors: Your remarks concerning the Martin Luther affair in Chicago show a marked lack of discernment. Your implication that the Luther film presents an honest view of Catholic theology and doctrine is erroneous. The Martin Luther film contains twelve truths; ten falsehoods; five false insinuations; ten defiant denials of Catholic doctrine, accompanied by gloating and ridicule; and twenty-two omissions, some of which are all-important and all of which are essential to an authentic biography of Luther. (*The Catholic Home Journal*, edited by Urban S. Adelman, O.F.M.)

The charge made repeatedly by the Protestant Ministers' alliance, the secular newspapers, and echoed by The Commonweal, that "Chicago Catholics have deprived their neighbors of the opportunity of viewing the Martin Luther film on TV" is not only dishonest —it is absurd.

The Protestant churches have their full portion of TV time for religious instruction, education and wor-

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ship. The Martin Luther film will be shown on TV any time a Protestant denomination, or group of Protestant denominations, has the courage to accept the responsibility of presenting it to the public. This film is a product of Lutheran Church Productions, Inc., made to be shown in Protestant churches as an aid to "instruction and education." It has been shown extensively under Protestant religious auspices as an "ideal Reformation Sunday picture." Therefore, "Martin Luther" is a Protestant religious film; it should be billed as such, and shown only under Protestant religious auspices—not on the Community Theater Program on which it was originally scheduled.

The "flurry of protests" from Chicago Catholics accomplished a great deal of good. They know their religion well enough to recognize an attack upon Catholic doctrine, and they love their religion enough to defend it. The cancellation of the Luther film forced the Ministerial alliance to come out into the open and reveal the real sponsors of this "Community Theater Program."

If the Martin Luther film is ever shown on TV under auspices other than Protestant religious sponsorship, justice demands that the Catholic Church be given equal time to defend Herself by reviewing the film and pointing out the half-truths, untruths, dishonest insinuations, and some vitally important omissions.

FRANCES ARMSTRONG.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: In the Martin Luther-TV controversy I think The Commonweal has missed an important point. The film was scheduled by WGN-TV to be shown as a regular Hollywood entertainment feature with a commercial sponsor at an evening hour when a feature picture is shown every week. I think Catholics can correctly object to this. The film was produced by Lutheran Church Productions, Inc., for their own religious purposes, and it should not be shown as though it were a regular Hollywood commercial production. In other words, if it had been scheduled on a Lutheran TV program I don't believe there could have been any legitimate objection.

(*Rev.*) RALPH MOLLAN.

Aurora, Ill.

TO the Editors: Your statement on the "Martin Luther" affair was an excellent counsel of prudence; let us only hope that it may be heeded.

It is important to be careful about the facts of the matter. The allegation was made that the cancellation was due to Roman Catholic pressure. The Chancery office denied that any representation had been made to the Station. However, in making this denial the spokesman for the Chancery office pointed out that whatever Chicago's 1,800,000 Catholics wanted to do was a matter for their own consciences. It is evident that, to any Catholic so inclined, this statement was a call to arms.

There are many non-Catholics of good will who have expressed concern over what the Church's attitude would be towards other religions if Catholics were to attain to a majority status. The Archdiocese of Chicago is the largest Roman Catholic diocese in the world. Its physical plant is impressive. Its activities are varied, far reaching and beneficial. Its history has been a rich one. Its accomplishments have been such that any Catholic should be proud. And then there are those 1,800,000, which though not a majority is certainly a sizable minority.

With all this it is inevitable that the Church in Chicago would be a powerful influence in the secular life of the community. In fact, it has reached the point where Chicago might be looked upon as a proving ground as to how the Church might behave where it has gained a dominant position. From this view the recent actions regarding the Luther film assume a more significant aspect. The fears of our non-Catholic friends probably seem more than hypothetical to them now, for certainly actions like the recent ones speak much louder than any Catholic protestations to the contrary.

What is more, in any large city such as Chicago, there are problems at the social and economic level—alcoholism, racial tensions, juvenile delinquency, slum clearance, etc.—the solution of which would be greatly furthered by the cooperation of all religious groups. The possibilities of such cooperation are defeated when such things as happened in Chicago occur.

Finally, we have to consider the large group in every community which has little or no regard for any religion. Controversies such as that under discussion certainly add to their comfort. We all admit that there are real differences among us and as a result that some controversy will inevitably result. However, we do not compromise our regard for truth by using restraint and avoiding controversy where possible, instead of exploiting our differences to the delight of the pagans.

In my opinion, the editorial in question was typical of your approach to these problems, penetrating and prudent in the broadest context.

TIMOTHY J. KINNALLY.

IN AN EDITORIAL entitled "Blunder of The Commonweal" which appeared in its Feb. 21, 1957 issue, the Witness, *official organ of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa, criticized The Commonweal's position on the TV showing of the Martin Luther film. The complete editorial follows:*

The Commonweal, a weekly magazine, blundered seriously last week when it condemned the people who

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successfully protested the presentation of the movie, "Martin Luther" on Chicago television station WGN-TV.

This action by The Commonweal has strengthened the hand of the forces which are now taking legal action to force WGN-TV to introduce the libelous Luther picture into the homes of unsuspecting television viewers.

We regret too that the action will be harmful to The Commonweal, a literate magazine edited by Catholic laymen. The Commonweal has voluble critics among Catholics. Opposition to the magazine is often unjustified and unfair. But even its friends, we believe, will find it difficult to defend the editorial in The Commonweal of Feb. 15.

It is not merely that we disagree with what the Commonweal said. There is every evidence that the article was written by someone who was ignorant of the facts and of the issues involved.

We have read the editorial with utmost care and find in it no evidence that its writer had ever seen the "Martin Luther" movie, had heard *why* his fellow-Catholics objected to it or had read the detailed and devastating criticism of the "history" in the film. The Commonweal's editors know how to write clearly and effectively. If the writer had first hand information about the movie or knew the grounds for Catholic objections to it, he would undoubtedly have said so.

We should bear in mind that television and radio try to avoid presenting matter which is offensive to any religious group. These industries in granting program time to religious groups do so with the explicit or implied condition that there shall be no attack on other denominations. For example, this was one of the conditions imposed by NBC when the Catholic Hour began broadcasting many years ago. In thus barring possible outbursts of sectarian rancor, radio and television undoubtedly curtail their own freedom. And why not?

There is no doubt that Catholics considered the Martin Luther movie to be a malicious distortion of Catholic faith and practice. Condemnation of the movie on such grounds was practically the unanimous reaction of Catholics who expressed themselves on the matter when the film appeared about three years ago. The American Catholic reaction was confirmed a short time later by Bishops of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany who recommended in November, 1953 that some scenes be modified in order not to hurt the feelings of Catholics.

In other words, "Martin Luther" is, as we see it, the sort of movie that would be barred as a matter of policy by television managers who know its true nature. WGN-TV was persuaded, or perhaps tricked, into scheduling it. We can see nothing wrong in telling the station what sort of picture it planned to show. The Catholics' estimate of the movie is not infallible. The manager may not agree with it. But he is certainly entitled to hear their opinions.

If some of the people who protested were unduly coercive, they are blameworthy. But there is nothing disastrous in the fact that the station's manager changed his mind after he was given information which the backers of the film in all frankness should have previously furnished him. Does The Commonweal believe that TV stations do wrong in denying their facilities to programs which seriously misrepresent, abuse, vilify or ridicule religious and racial groups? Does The Commonweal believe that members of the groups threatened with misrepresentation or abuse must refrain from expressing their opinion in the matter?

In refreshing contrast to The Commonweal was the stand taken by the Chicago Rabbinical Association. The rabbis were asked to join in a movement to ask the Federal Communications Commission to force WGN-TV to show the movie. After considerable deliberation the Rabbinical Association decided that there was no issue of censorship or freedom.

We believe that the rabbis—most commendably—were inspired also by enlightened self-interest. If the FCC can force a television station to show an anti-Catholic picture today, it can compel the showing of an anti-Semitic one tomorrow.

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ADDRESS: THE REGISTRAR

IN ITS ISSUE of Feb. 22, 1957, the St. Louis Review, *official newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, ran an editorial entitled "Censorship in Chicago." The complete editorial follows:*

A prominent Protestant magazine [Christian Century] carried a 'cloak and dagger' report recently of how the Roman Catholic Chancery officials in Chicago managed to ban the televising of the film 'Martin Luther' which was scheduled to be shown on last Dec. 21. The Chicago Chancery claims that it made no official protest, the article states, but how is it that

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a representative of Cardinal Stritch visited an officer of WGN-TV on the afternoon of Feb. 14 at 2 p.m. Intrigue?

We do not have the slightest idea why this representative of the Cardinal went to the TV station but, if he had nothing else to speak to the officer about, we think he might well have mentioned that he thought the forthcoming presentation of the film was a sad mistake.

The author of the article is participating in the most powerful and successful tactic of Protestantism today in its protest against the Catholic Church. He does his level best to associate in the minds of his readers the concepts 'Roman Catholic' and 'censorship, intolerance and rigid thought control.' This is the thematic thread that runs through nearly every article of this kind.

The author simply states instances where officials of the Church have been opposed to the showing of the film but nowhere does he discuss why there was opposition. Could this not be considered intolerance on his part? We feel sure that, in principle at least, he takes the position that the Christian Church must stand for truth and combat the distortion of it. He cannot be unaware, if his files are bulging with Catholic comments on the picture as he says, that Catholic historical scholars have pointed out dozens of misrepresentations in it. He must surely think that the Church is made of giggling idiots if he envisions a situation where a presentation of this kind which subtly suggests that the Papacy is the infamous beast of the Apocalypse will be welcomed and admired by those who consider the office established by Our Lord Himself.

The crowning canard of the whole story is the quotation (in quotes, too, mind you) of a 'high official of the Church' who supposedly said, 'I'm no authority on Reformation history, so I can't comment on its accuracy, but it seems to me to be a fair and honest film . . .' In a matter of this nature so heavily laden with the cause of the one true Church, so fraught with consequences concerning eternal salvation, if one has no idea about the accuracy of the message he cannot possibly have any idea whether it is a fair and honest presentation. We seriously question whether any 'high official of the Church' said any such thing.

Boiled down and stripped of its encumbrances, the gentleman's argument is simply this: If the Roman Catholic Church does not permit its members to put themselves in the circumstance in which they might very easily be deceived by half-truths, untruths, and gross misrepresentations then it is a terribly intolerant institution; if it forbids what it is convinced is spiritually harmful to its members then it is like all those mean mothers and censorious fathers who discipline their children's reading, listening and viewing habits. Odd argument, isn't it?

THE TOLEDO Blade, *a leading Ohio daily newspaper, discussed The Commonweal's editorial on the "Martin Luther" case. The complete editorial follows:*

The editors of the Catholic weekly, The Commonweal, have made the strongest possible case against suppression and censorship based solely on the fact that what is complained against is objectionable to any single group. They strike at the heart of the problem of the "pressures which any one group can legitimately exercise in a society where there exists a plurality of incompatible faiths."

Specifically, The Commonweal condemns the exercise of pressure by Catholics on a Chicago television station last December, resulting in cancellation of plans to show the motion picture, "Martin Luther," which was generously praised when it was shown in movie theaters some years ago. Conceding that portions of the picture are objectionable to Catholics on theological grounds, The Commonweal contends that this is no valid excuse to prevent non-Catholics seeing it.

Cancellation, The Commonweal points out, is harmful in several ways. It raises questions "concerning the pressure which any religious group can reasonably exercise without violating the democratic charter." It emphasizes theological differences which the "best of recent scholarship has done so much to narrow." It accentuates the Protestant concept of the Catholic church as a "monolithic organization willing, even eager, to impose its will by mass pressure."

Most important, The Commonweal contends, it weakens yet further the "still undefined 'freedom' of the TV screen." Even should this station later decide to show "Martin Luther," the effect of the incident will surely be to make owners of television stations increasingly wary in scheduling programs that may possibly offend this group, or that.

"This unfortunate reaction," The Commonweal observes, "will inevitably impinge upon all religious groups, including Catholics. The result is that the freedom of this medium has been, in effect, severely curtailed."

Thus are the benefits of free expression lost through exercise of pressure by any of the many minority groups in our pluralistic society. They do not, in bringing this pressure to bear, protect themselves—even from the real or imagined offense they protest against. Rather they weaken the protection the right of free expression gives to them, as it does to others.

In recognizing and emphasizing this truth in connection with the successful effort to prevent the showing of "Martin Luther," The Commonweal's editors demonstrate an understanding of what freedom of religion, as well as freedom of expression, means in a democratic nation. It is an understanding all too rare among Protestants and Catholics alike.

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BOOKS

A Sampler of Neo-Writing

ZERO NO. 8 ANTHOLOGY. Edited by Themostocles Hoetis. Zero Press. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

THE EDITOR would seem a trifle overawed by his contributing confreres, be they feted or unsung. In noting one whose message has filtered down to the checkered intellectual income groups, he calmly protests in effect that the true talent will always be redeemed. Another time we are hastily assured that a neo-immortal is still big as life. Then there is the bleating accent on youth as if necessarily it heralded the "new." One overlooks this wishful posturing; for what Mr. Hoetis has packaged is the meatiest of current samplers, designed to acquaint American readers with neo-writing, both in English and in translation.

The scope of certain selections frankly invites extra-literary annotation: viz. the extract from Sartre's play, *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* (1952), the most absorbing dramatization of his existential cosmogony to date. Like so many of his plays it is essentially closet melodrama, the anomaly being that his psycho-philosophical tomes themselves do his dramatic perspectives fuller justice than either the plays or novels. Yet in this play there is to be found a certain *élan* curiously un-Sartrian: it is as if a Diderot were incarnating Antichrist. But then one is reminded that a favorite mask of the author of *Being and Nothingness* has been that of metaphysical devil's advocate. His is the angel of abstraction: his drama is not cast between spirit and idea or idea and reality, but is the radical contest of ideas themselves; consequently his demiurge is one with whom his protagonist cannot enter into a pact that has not the devil's blessing. The Manichean god is a sadistic god who shames the devil, but Sartre's is a god who uses his suffering creatures to punish himself, who commits deicide in the hearts of men.

Also included is the synopsis of Sartre's latest play, *Nekrassoo,* from which it is difficult to discern whether he is marking time or serving it; reading like a mid-1955 Communist Party handout, it is an appalling illustration of Sartre's *sacrificium intellectualis.* Colin Wilson feeds a staggering volume of learning (at sixteen he was dipping into Eliot) into the few pages of a piece that begins as an informal discourse on the future of the novel and expands as sort of *Outsider*-revisited. Wilson is becoming the white-haired boy of the back-to-religion movement among certain philosophasters; he is an excellent writer, also something of a weight-lifter stalking the handier perennials. He calls for a kind of Bergsonian science of religion—Shaw is his religious man *par excellence*—that might rescue religion from the hedonists; he appears convinced that the world's religions have crystallized. He is sometimes stimulatingly debatable, but his thinking here is heterodox patchwork, fanciful when not fuzzy.

Paul Bowles is the most ardent of our expatriate prose symbolists; in "The Hours After Noon" the theme is desire under the Moroccan cypresses, with triple-threat sexual frustrations figuring prominently. There are variegated Anglo-Saxon starvelings and one insatiable, the continental demirep Royer. The others get the full treatment, but only Royer is managed forcefully. Bowles is so committed against himself to the mystic-erotic that what should be probing is only groping, and what seemed intensity was but style passing off in the climactic dust cloud of juvenile "action." To better assess the sensuous accomplishment of his style one has to read his brilliant Ceylon travel piece (reprinted), which has all the effortless subtlety his fiction labors for.

Of the short fiction, Henry Calet's "The Open Door" is a masterful analytic dismantling of a *petit bourgeois* household. Helen Cohen's

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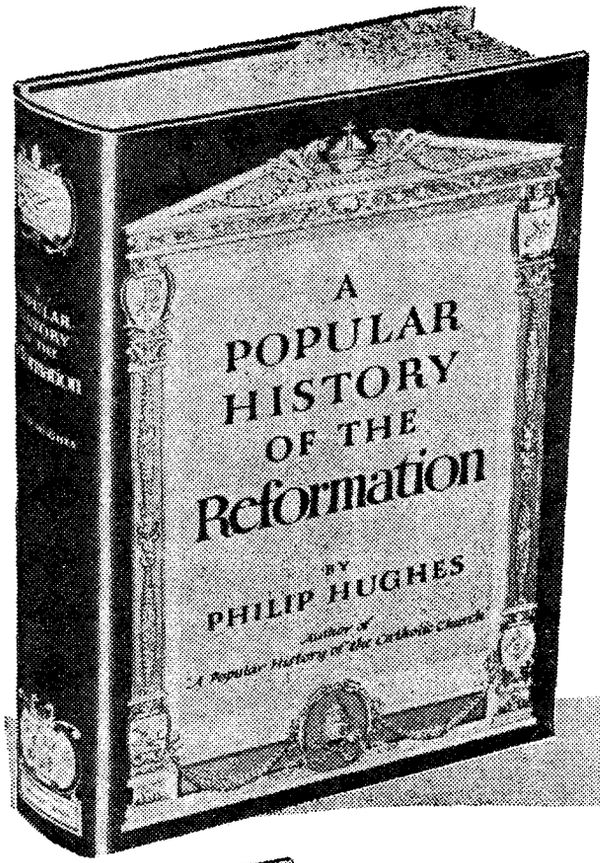

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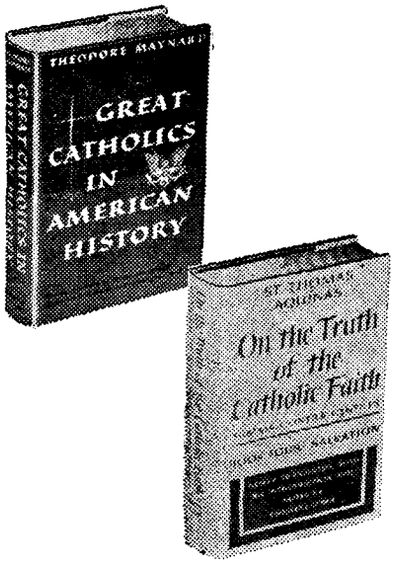

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first story, "Curds and Whey," is adept in mood-styling. In "A Moment of Green Laurel," Gore Vidal aims to throw a tortured light over a psychological chasm and throws instead an effete one; but this too is well-written. Ursule Molinaro and Ahmed Ben Driss El Yacoubi offer pungent fables not to be read off the top level alone; though less restrained in undertones, Samuel Beckett's "The Smeraldina's Billet Doux" is amatory mimicry that may secure a place near Mrs. Bloom's soliloquy.

The most appreciable American contribution is in the poems, more meditative than they are lyrical, yet none of which, even the most Eliot-derived, is uninteresting. Marianne Moore is in high form in "Style," there is a sharp morsel from Hart Crane in "Lenses," while among the unfamiliar, Asa Benveniste, Sanora Babb and George Solomos best succeed in enveloping their effects. The reprinted "Children's Cradle Songs" of Lorca provide the most poignant prose in the book, representing him in his most poetic precision. Alyse Gregory hurls a furiously well-timed-and-aimed broadside into the bull ring with "Six Deaths In the Afternoon." Thomas Shelton's quasi-scientific notions sound like Whitehead out of Gertrude Stein. And nothing in the book could top that.

On a Theme from Childhood

THE DOG AT CLAMBERCROWN. By Jocelyn Brooke. Vanguard. $4.

By ROSEMARY F. DEEN

JOCELYN BROOKE is an English author who has written novels, autobiography, poems, and books on flowers. *The Dog at Clambercrown,* sub-titled "An Excursion into Autobiography," is a mixture of travel journal and variations on a theme from childhood. Half the book is an account of a journey to Enna in Sicily, arranged in sections. Alternating with these are sections describing a young child's world, an adolescent school period, and some time in the army.

What holds all this material together is the romantic theme of the search for the remote, the "other." It all has the flavor of Rimbaud: "*La vraie vie est absente.*" The child, the youth, the man, each is restricted or lacking in some way and seeks compensation or completion. The physical limits of the young child's world are narrow, and he is always attended by his nurse, Ninnie. He is "frontier-conscious" —alert to each boundary and speculating about what lies beyond.

The physical limits naturally come to represent other limits. Brought up in a genteel, female society, the child yearns for the rough, male world of pubs, the hunt, war, or men beyond the class barrier. He conceives "erotic" passions for the gardener, the baker's boy, a hunter. These seem to him profane loves, as opposed to sacred love, personified by Ninnie.

The evocation of that other life was most compelling at "The Dog-and-Clambercrown" — an old inn situated in the heart of the country beyond the frontiers. The inn was populated by his fancy with the heroes of his profane loves and set in the shadowed country "haunted perpetually by thunder and the crying of horns." It was, clearly, the hub of that other life—wild, free, male—from which he was so completely secured.

When the child becomes an adolescent, he goes to see Clambercrown. This part of the book reaches a climax in the excursion of the

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lonely, bookish youth, in the throes of "an abnormally delayed puberty." The penetration of the frontiers of the unknown probably dramatizes the experience of growing up—becoming an independent male. The youth experiences an emotional climax, at least symbolically sexual, alone, during a storm. But it ends in disappointment. It is not, after all, a discovery but a confirmation of his sense of futility. His arrival at the inn is anticlimactic. At a small house, closed as an inn six months before, he is greeted by a woman. She offers him, in place of the "masculine" ale he had hoped for, a glass of milk.

Parallel to this excursion is the journey to Enna. Enna, where Proserpina was carried off by Dis, lay behind another childhood frontier. The myth had a special significance for the child: the feeling of homesickness, "the ruined spring," the terrible underground, and Ceres' (Ninnie's) search for the lost child. But when the man arrives at the shores of Lake Pergusa on Easter morning, he finds Proserpina unrisen, the spring unborn. He botanizes a little; he finds an anemone, an orchid or two; he remembers Clambercrown. He is not enthusiastic.

Mr. Brooke's subtitle seems a disclaimer—even an evasion—more than a description of the book. The reader is warned not to expect an autobiography. But he may wonder when he finishes the book what "an excursion" is. Does it bear the same relation to autobiography that Graham Greene's "entertainments" bear to novels? When the reader thinks of the author, returning from the army to live with his mother and Ceres-Ninnie, he may find the dictionary definition apt: "a short trip taken with the intention of returning to the point of departure."

It was prudent not to label the book autobiography. What it lacks that even a second-rate autobiography must have is people. Mr. Brooke explains guilelessly, "I am . . . more interested in places than in people." Perhaps it is fitting that the landscapes of childhood contain only occasional figures. But there is a curious privation about an entire book in which no one who means anything to the author is more than a figure.

Further, there is an overbalance of means to end. Much of the book is trivial or downright boring. During the trip to Sicily we are spared none of the tedium of travel. En route Mr. Brooke weaves in observations on contemporary literature which have neither weight, perceptiveness, nor the charm of eccentric personal observation.

Mr. Brooke needed to find some form for the wit and the nuggets of real experience in the book. The short sketches in such a book as Colette's *My Mother's House* are, beyond anything, fresh and clear. Achieving clarity, she has no need to make the experiences of childhood echo and re-echo. The world of the English child, it may be objected, is more murky than pastoral. But it can still be caught without double plots. Graham Greene, for example, gets the quality of a spoiled garden of Eden in short stories and in the autobiographical preface to *The Lost Childhood* with fine economy of detail. The lyrical sense of places as presences, the nostalgia for what "we never can directly know," does not require the balance of tedium. We know that well enough.

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